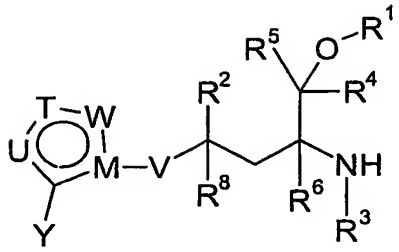
CLAIMS:

1. A compound of formula (I)



(I)

wherein:

Y represents C1 to 4 alkyl, C1 to 4 alkoxy, halogen, CN, C=CH, NO_2, CH_2OH, CHO, $COCH_3$, NH_2, NHCHO, NHCOCH3 or $NHSO_2CH_3$; said alkyl or alkoxy group being optionally further substituted by one or more fluorine atoms;

T, U and W independently represent CX, N, NR^{13}, O or $S(O)_m$, except that at least one of T, U and W must represent a heteroatom and except that not more than one of T, U and W may represent NR^{13}, O or $S(O)_m$; m represents an integer 0, 1 or 2; and each X group independently represents H, C1 to 4 alkyl, C1 to 4 alkoxy, halogen, OH, SH, CN, C=CH, $N(R^{14})_2$, NO_2, CH_2OH, CHO, $COCH_3$ or NHCHO; said alkyl or alkoxy group being optionally further substituted by one or more fluorine atoms;

V represents NR^7, O, CH_2, $S(O)_n$, OCH_2, CH_2O, NR^7CH_2, CH_2NR^7, $CH_2S(O)_n$, $S(O)_nCH_2$, CH_2CH_2 or CH=CH;

n represents an integer 0, 1 or 2;

M represents C, and when M is bonded to a CH_2 moiety in V, then M may also represent N;

R^1 and R^8 independently represent H or Me.

R^2 represents C1 to 4 alkyl, C2 to 4 alkenyl, C2 to 4 alkynyl, C3 to 6 cycloalkyl or a 4 to 8 membered saturated heterocyclic ring incorporating one heteroatom selected from O, S and N; any of said groups being optionally further substituted by C1 to 4 alkyl, C1 to 4 alkoxy, C1 to 4 alkylthio, C3 to 6 cycloalkyl, halogen or phenyl; said phenyl group being optionally further substituted by one or more substituents selected independently from halogen, C1 to 4 alkyl, C1 to 4 alkoxy, CF_3, OCF_3, CN or NO_2;

or R^2 represents phenyl or a five or six membered aromatic heterocyclic ring containing 1 to 3 heteroatoms independently selected from O, S and N; said phenyl or aromatic heterocyclic ring being optionally substituted by one or more substituents selected independently from halogen, C1 to 4 alkyl, C1 to 4 alkoxy, OH, CN, NO_2 or NR^9R^{10}; said alkyl or alkoxy group being optionally further substituted by one or more fluorine atoms;

R^3 represents H, C1 to 4 alkyl or C3 to 6 cycloalkyl; said alkyl group being optionally substituted by C1 to 4 alkoxy, halogen, hydroxy, $NR^{11}R^{12}$, phenyl or a five or six membered aromatic or saturated heterocyclic ring containing 1 to 3 heteroatoms independently selected from O, S and N; said phenyl or aromatic heterocyclic ring being optionally further substituted by halogen, C1 to 4 alkyl, C1 to 4 alkoxy, CF_3, OCF_3, CN or NO_2;

R^7 and R^{14} independently represent H or C1 to 2 alkyl;

R^4, R^5, R^6, R^9, R^{10}, R^{11} and R^{12} independently represent H or C1 to 4 alkyl;

R^{13} represents H, C1 to 4 alkyl, CHO, $COCH_3$, SO_2CH_3 or CF_3;

or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof.

2. A compound of formula (I), according to Claim 1, wherein V represents $S(O)_n$ and n represents 0.

3. A compound according to Claim 1 or 2 wherein Y represents CN.

4. A compound of formula (I), according to Claim 1, which is:
3-[[(1*R*,3*S*)-3-amino-4-hydroxy-1-phenylbutyl]thio]-2-thiophenecarbonitrile;
3-[[(1R,3S)-3-amino-4-hydroxy-1-phenylbutyl]thio]-5-methyl-2-thiophenecarbonitrile;
or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt, enantiomer or racemate thereof.

5. A compound of formula (I), according to any one of Claims 1 to 4, or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof, for use as a medicament.

6. A pharmaceutical composition comprising a compound of formula (I) according to any one of Claims 1 to 4, or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof, in admixture with a pharmaceutically acceptable adjuvant, diluent or carrier.

7. The use of a compound of formula (I) according to any one of Claims 1 to 4, or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof, in the manufacture of a medicament for the treatment or prophylaxis of human diseases or conditions in which inhibition of nitric oxide synthase activity is beneficial.

8. The use as claimed in Claim 7 wherein it is predominantly inducible nitric oxide synthase that is inhibited.

9. The use of a compound of formula (I) as defined in any one of Claims 1 to 4, or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof, in the manufacture of a medicament, for the treatment or prophylaxis of inflammatory diseases.

10. The use as claimed in Claim 9 wherein the disease is inflammatory bowel disease.

11. The use as claimed in Claim 9 wherein the disease is rheumatoid arthritis.

12. The use as claimed in Claim 9 wherein the disease is osteoarthritis.

13. The use of a compound of formula (I) as defined in any one of Claims 1 to 4, or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof, in the manufacture of a medicament, for the treatment or prophylaxis of pain.

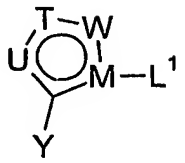
14. The use of a compound of formula (I) as defined in any one of Claims 1 to 4, or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof, in combination with a COX-2 inhibitor, in the manufacture of a medicament, for the treatment or prophylaxis of inflammatory diseases.

15. A method of treating, or reducing the risk of, human diseases or conditions in which inhibition of nitric oxide synthase activity is beneficial which comprises administering a therapeutically effective amount of a compound of formula (I), as defined in any one of Claims 1 to 4, or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof, to a person suffering from, or at increased risk of, such diseases or conditions.

16. A method of treating, or reducing the risk of, inflammatory disease in a person suffering from, or at risk of, said disease, wherein the method comprises administering to the person a therapeutically effective amount of a compound of formula (I), as defined in any one of Claims 1 to 4, or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt, enantiomer or racemate thereof.

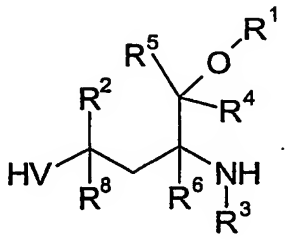
17. A process for the preparation of a compound of formula (I), as defined in any one of Claims 1 to 4, or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt, enantiomer or racemate thereof, wherein the process comprises:

(a) reaction of a compound of formula (II)



(II)

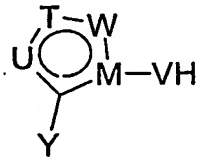
wherein T, U, W, Y and M are as defined in Claim 1 and L^1 represents a leaving group, with a compound of formula (III)



(III)

wherein R^1, R^2, R^3, R^4, R^5, R^6, R^8 and V are as defined in Claim 1; or

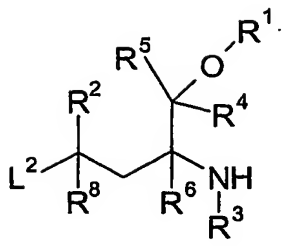
(b) reaction of a compound of formula (IV)



(IV)

wherein T, U, W, M, Y and V are as defined in Claim 1,

with a compound of formula (V)



(V)

wherein R^1, R^2, R^3, R^4, R^5, R^6 and R^8 are as defined in Claim 1 and L^2 is a leaving group;

and where desired or necessary converting the resultant compound of formula (I), or another salt thereof, into a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof; or converting one compound of formula (I) into another compound of formula (I); and where desired converting the resultant compound of formula (I) into an optical isomer thereof.